

Message Text

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SUBJECT: JEWISH DISSIDENT VIEWS ON NEW FOREIGN CURRENCY REGULA-
TIONS

1. PROMINENT JEWISH DISSIDENT SOURCES COMMENTED TO
EMBOFF NOVEMBER 24 ON THEIR INTERPRETATION OF THE
PURPOSE AND EFFECT OF THE CHANGES IN THE FOREIGN CURRENCY
REGULATIONS. ACCORDING TO THESE SOURCES, THE MEASURE
IS DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY AGAINST THE JEWS AND IN
PARTICULAR AGAINST JEWISH DISSIDENTS. ITS PURPOSE, THEY
FEEL, IS TO REDUCE THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE
TO THE DISSIDENT COMMUNITY, MOST OF THE MEMBERS OF WHICH
ARE NOT PERMANENTLY EMPLOYED. OUR SOURCES NOTE THAT
THE CHANGE IN REGULATIONS IS LIKELY TO REDUCE THEIR
EFFECTIVE INCOME BY "MORE THAN THREE-QUARTERS."

2. A SECONDARY REASON BEHIND THE CHANGE IN REGULATIONS,
WE ARE TOLD, STEMS FROM SIMPLY ENVY AND ANTI-SEMITISM.
UNDER THE OLD REGULATIONS, JEWISH DISSIDENTS, WHO RECEIVE
A LARGE PORTION OF THEIR INCOME FROM ABROAD, WERE AMONG
THE SMALL PERCENTAGE OF SOVIET CITIZENS WHO HAD ACCESS
TO THE HIGH QUALITY SOVIET AND FOREIGN GOODS AVAILABLE
IN THE HARD CURRENCY STORES. OUR SOURCES CLAIM THAT
SOVIET BUREAUCRATS HAVE LONG CRITICIZED THE JEWS
BECAUSE OF THEIR GOOD FORTUNE IN BEING ABLE TO SHOP
IN THESE STORES.

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3. JEWISH DISSIDENTS TAKE THE POSITION THAT THE CHANGED REGULATIONS WILL NOT RESULT IN AN INCREASE IN THE TOTAL FOREIGN CURRENCY RECEIPTS BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT, SINCE THEY CLAIM THAT CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ABROAD WILL DRY UP. (THAT IS NOT NECESSARILY CLEAR, HOWEVER, SINCE FOREIGN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE JEWISH DISSIDENTS MAY RISE IN ORDER TO MAKE UP AT LEAST SOME OF THE LOSS OF PURCHASING POWER WHICH STEMMED FROM THE RESALE OF GOODS PURCHASED WITH "HARD CURRENCY CERTIFICATES.")

4. OUR SOURCES TELL US THAT AS SOON AS THEY ARE SURE THAT THE REGULATIONS WILL IN FACT BE CHANGED IN THE WAYS THEY UNDERSTAND, THEY INTEND TO MOUNT A CONCERTED CAMPAIGN BOTH THROUGH THE WESTERN CORRESPONDENTS IN MOSCOW AND JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES IN AN ATTEMPT TO PUT PRESSURE ON SOVIET AUTHORITIES TO CHANGE THEIR RULING.

5. COMMENT: WHILE WE FEEL THAT THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN GENERAL AND JEWISH DISSIDENTS IN PARTICULAR ARE ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL TARGETS OF THE CHANGED REGULATIONS, UNLIKE OUR DISSIDENT SOURCES WE DO NOT FEEL THAT THE JEWS ARE THE ONLY TARGET. OTHERS INCLUDE ARMENIANS AND GEORGIANS.

6. WE ARE IMPRESSED WITH THE STRENGTH OF THE DISSIDENT REACTION TO THE CHANGED REGULATIONS AND ASSUME THAT THERE WILL INDEED BE AN EFFORT ON THEIR PART TO MOUNT A CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST, PERHAPS ALONG THE LINES OF THE "EDUCATION TAX" CAMPAIGN.
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